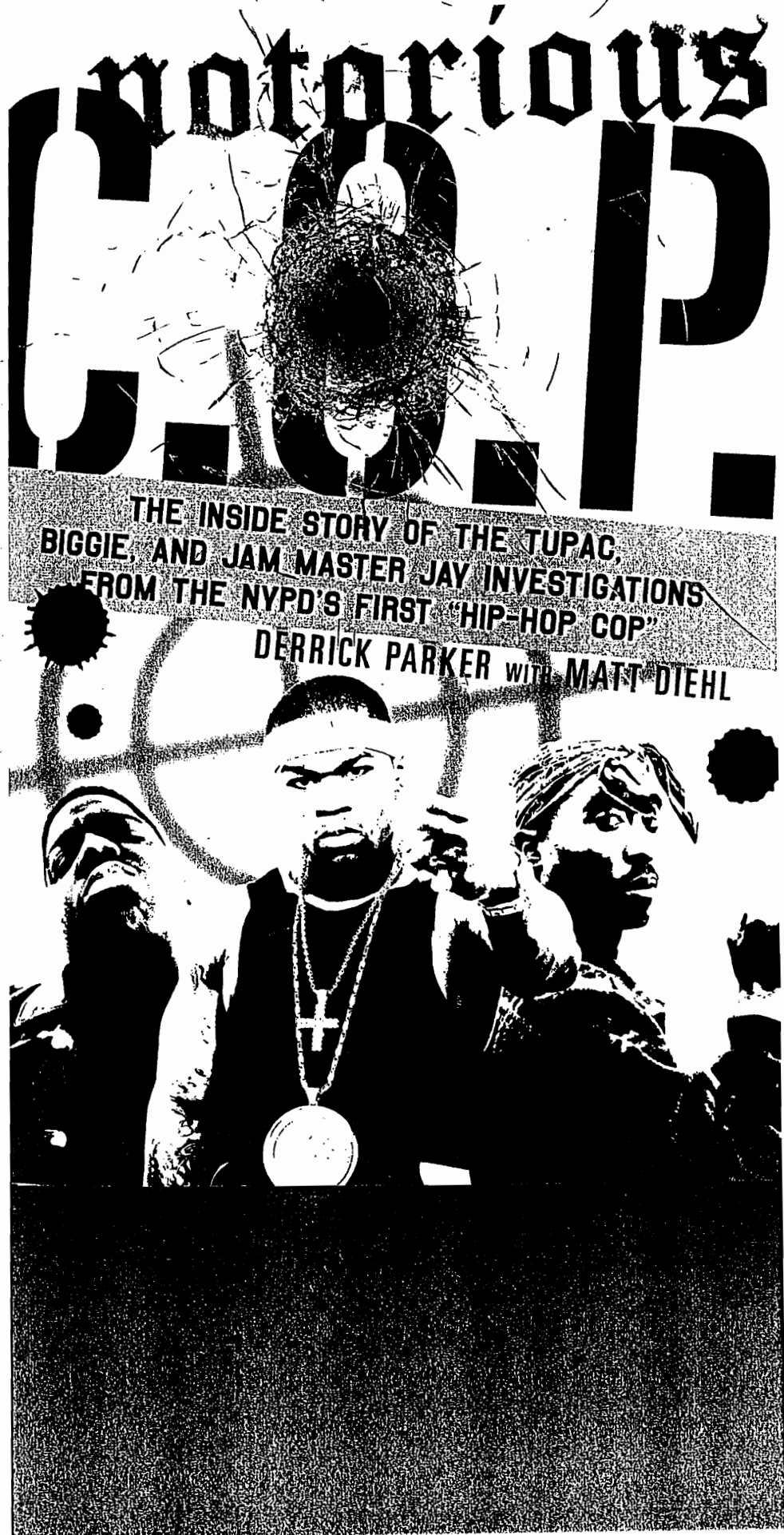


EXHIBIT 5

compelling examination of why so many rap crimes remain unsolved."
—ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY



"rat." It's funny how criminals and cops both share the same code: rats are looked down upon in both cultures, which shows how we're on both sides of the same coin. I wasn't immune to that, either: even though I did the "right" thing, I didn't want it getting out about me that I ratted out a cop. But I couldn't turn down the order—it was my job.

But my job was soon to change.

You see, I was up to be transferred out of narcotics: that meant I'd finally be a detective. Once you get your gold detective shield, you're on your way out, like Lenny Bruce used to say. In law enforcement, that gold shield means you're the man. At this point, I'd been on the force four and a half years, two of those in Bronx Narcotics—it was my time. And of course, the new quotas didn't hurt. They don't tell you there are quotas, but there are. The mid-to-late '80s was at a time when the NYPD started seeing an influx of black and Hispanic sergeants; I got transferred because they needed black detectives in the squad. At last I get promoted in '86 to detective third-grade—gold shield and all, wearing a suit and tie like on *NYPD Blue*. I was happy, but if I thought the Bronx was tough, well, I learned I ain't seen nothing yet when I got my assignment.

After I found out I'd been promoted, me and my pals went out to celebrate. We hit all the hip-hop clubs—the Copa, Bentley's, Latin Quarter. I think we ended up at the Roxy to check out a new rap group called Boogie Down Productions. (I say "I think" because it was that kind of night; I'm not one for excess, but there are exceptions—I always say, "If you remember that night, you weren't really there.")

Boogie Down Productions were the hot street group at the time thanks to their charismatic, outspoken frontman named KRS-One, who used to be homeless on the same South Bronx streets I worked as an undercover narc. I loved Boogie Down Productions because I could relate to their music: even though he strongly criticized the police in his lyrics, "reality rapper" KRS-One rapped about what was really going on in the ghetto streets—BDP's first single was even called "Crack Attack." I knew the violent, desperate inner-city world Boogie Down Productions described, 'cause I was in it every

then I would crack them. Working homicide didn't depress me; I was gung ho—I would've taken all the murders and solve every one of 'em if I could. I had a lot to occupy my mind in Brooklyn.

The lesson I learned early on trawling Crooklyn's mean streets for killers is this: if you want to solve a homicide, you're going to need informants. *Period.* Fuck DNA testing, fuck all the flashy, divorced-from-reality high-tech cop shows you see on TV: informants are the way most homicides are solved. Finding informants is not so different from being a door-to-door salesman: it's all about knocking on doors, sales pitches, and cultivation of mutually beneficial, long-term relationships.

Cultivating people is a crucial skill for any detective, yet not all of them get that. When it came to cultivating informants, my style proved different from most other cops I worked with, who had a distinct "us vs. them" attitude when it came to perps; intimidation was their preferred method. Me, I would go out on the street and meet people, let them get to know me. If I stopped at a bodega to get a soda, I would stop and talk to the people standing on the corner outside. I would say, "Hey, man, what's your name? You're always at this store—what you doing?" I started to joke around with them, like, "I know you're out selling drugs—one of these days I'm going to catch you." They'd say, "Yo, man, you're not going to catch *me*."

Once the dudes on the corner realized I was part of the 'hood and not going anywhere, things got more friendly. To gain an informant's trust, you have to show them you're not always just looking to arrest them; you have to demonstrate that you can relate to them in a real way. To that end, I would talk to them in their lingo. I would talk to them as a minority would—because *I am a minority*; I knew their slang because that's how I spoke myself. I'd even joke around with them about what music they were listening to. If I saw a guy holding a cassette, I'd be like, "My man, Big Daddy Kane is hot—pimping *ain't* easy!" "How do you know Big Daddy Kane?" the guy would respond with a funny look, like I had just stepped out of a UFO. "You're a *cop*."

Inevitably, my street knowledge would pique their curiosity. "If you're so down, then who's your favorite rap group?" they'd ask, try-

she shared with K-Son, they made her open the door and rushed in. The intruders surprised K-Son, shooting him point-blank before he could get to his guns, which lay on his night table alongside his bulletproof vest. Terrified, K-Son's girlfriend ran out of the apartment, but as she started making her way down the stairs, the gunmen shot her in the head; she died en route to the hospital.

With the A-Team's ability to cause terror and fear like that—indeed, to erase anyone who might be a credible witness against them—it was hard to cultivate credible informants to take them down; we had to be a little more creative. The only way to take down a group so organized, tight, and feared was to go to the people around them, starting at the gutter bottom. You go to their enemies, their girlfriends—maybe their neighbors are sick of putting up with their mayhem; there's always one disgruntled citizen in the bunch who's sick and tired and doesn't want to take the neighborhood bullies' shit anymore.

Me, I always found baby mommas to be the best informants. If the perp didn't pay his child support, if he's not taking care of his kids, if he's messing around with someone on the side, his baby momma will tell you anything and everything. Shit, she'll even show you where he hides his guns and drugs, and even the addresses of his other girlfriends—which is usually where he's hiding out.

Most of the informants who helped take down the A-Team came from arresting the people around them. As a result, the kind of people we were dealing with were not always the most trustworthy. Some of the guys from the A-Team's lower levels had been arrested for selling crack, or maybe they had a shooting or assault on their record. They'd be the losers of the bunch, often predicate felons; a predicate felon is someone who's convicted of two felonies or more. Some criminals are proud of their predicate-felon status, wearing it as a badge of honor—50 Cent's G-Unit homey Tony Yayo titled his debut album *Thoughts of a Predicate Felon*—but a lot of them didn't want to go back to prison. And if you have multiple felonies, it means you're going to start doing real time, which isn't fun as you get older. For a lot of these guys, when they're eighteen or nineteen,